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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
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**IRAQ: IMPEDIMENTS TO DEMOCRACY AND THE ROLE  
OF COALITION FORCES**

**By**

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**A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily  
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

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## Abstract

As USCENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks suspected might be the case when he urged planners to anticipate the possibility of “catastrophic victory,” the military outcome of Operation Iraqi Freedom was never in doubt. Coalition forces decisively defeated the Iraqi military in a matter of days and Saddam Hussein’s governing Baathist regime quickly fell. Contrary to the speed and efficiency of the battlefield victory, however, subsequent Coalition efforts to stabilize Iraq and effect regime change to a democratic (i.e. representative) form of government have proven anything but decisive. A year later a variety of overwhelming contextual factors continue to impede stabilization efforts and the transition to democracy. These factors include historic divisive tribal, ethnic, and religious fracture lines; a lack of precedent; and a pervasive anti-western disposition. This paper focuses on identifying military courses of action (COAs) available to the operational level Coalition force commander to help bring democracy to Iraq. COAs identified include ensuring Coalition members remain committed; broadening the Coalition; recruiting Arab and other “non-western” coalition members; constructively engaging moderate clerics, while neutralizing extremist clerics; and stemming the flow of insurgents in Iraq.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Nature of the Issue:**

On 19 March 2003, after almost 12 years of Iraqi non-compliance with provisions stipulated to by Iraq at the end of the 1991 Gulf War, growing concern regarding its suspected weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program, and suspicion that it was supporting/harboring terrorist organizations (i.e. al Qaeda), a U.S.-lead coalition acting under the aegis of UN Security Council Resolutions 1441 and 1472 attacked and swiftly defeated Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Primary Coalition goals were liberating Iraq by defeating and removing Saddam Hussein's ruling regime (to ultimately be replaced by a democratic/representative government), and disarming Iraq's WMD program,<sup>i</sup> as well as eradicating Iraqi support to terrorists.

Initial adulation at the unparalleled success of the Coalition military victory and the rapid toppling of Saddam Hussein's Baathist Party regime quickly dimmed as anarchy reigned and control was seemingly lost. Amidst finger pointing as to who was responsible for the looting and random destruction that followed, Iraqi elation at the ouster of Hussein slowly turned to anger and wide-spread suspicion of long-term Coalition (primarily western/U.S.) motives and interests in Iraq. Vitriolic accusations by Islamic clerics of likely western/U.S. imperialism, accompanied by inflammatory rhetoric urging violent resistance of the Coalition, has greatly complicated and protracted the "stabilization" phase of the war.

Now, a year after President Bush declared major military operations over, and amidst ongoing preparations for the stand down the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and relinquishment of sovereignty to the Iraqi people (in the form of the Iraqi Governing Council), Coalition forces remain actively engaged in what Middle East expert Tony

Cordesman has referred to as “armed nation building,”<sup>ii</sup> and are regularly targeted by increasingly sophisticated and organized insurgents and religious militias. In many ways, a stable and secure democratic Iraq appears as distant as ever.

**Thesis:**

Given the ongoing insurgency, and seemingly insurmountable historic, cultural, demographic, and religious challenges, bringing lasting democracy (i.e. representative government) to Iraq will prove exceedingly difficult.

**Impact:**

By all accounts, Iraq faces an uncertain future. Should Coalition efforts to create a safe, secure and stable environment succeed, the Iraqi Governing Council may very well succeed in adopting and implementing a constitution and a democratic (or a representative/pluralistic variant thereof) government. In order for this process to proceed, a safe, secure and stable Iraq is absolutely imperative. Given its prominent position in the Arab world, a peaceful, prosperous, democratic Iraq would most certainly be a source of regional stability (a long-time strategic U.S. objective).

On the other hand, should the Iraqi people reject democracy, and instead, adopt an Islamist-based theocratic government like Iraq’s neighbor Iran, all bets would be off. Such a government would most certainly prove hostile to western/U.S. interests, and would likely represent a “worst-case” scenario. To help guard against this potential eventuality, Coalition forces will remain in Iraq indefinitely despite the scheduled June 30<sup>th</sup> transfer of sovereignty. Coalition forces will continue training Iraqi military and security forces and will be available to augment them as needed. And, for the foreseeable future, the Coalition will retain veto

authority over the Iraqi decision-making process. In addition, the new 1,300-person U.S. Embassy is expected to exert considerable influence over Iraqi affairs.

### **Defining Democracy:**

Before proceeding, it is important to define what is meant by democracy in this context. This is important because Iraqi democracy, even in a best-case-scenario, is likely to fall well short of the western concept of the word. Democracy, as applied to Iraq, connotes some form of representative, pluralistic government. It does not necessarily equate to the concept of “one person, one vote” we are used to. According to Byman and Pollack of the Brookings Institution’s Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Iraqi democracy should include: defined individual rights (limited government trespass); a “reserved powers” clause; a system of checks and balances; indirect election of the president (to ensure minority input); and, geographic legislative representation.<sup>iii</sup>

As currently proposed in the Transitional Administrative Law (i.e. Iraq’s interim constitution), the Political Advisory Council (Iraq’s interim legislative body) will include representatives from each of Iraq’s major ethnic/religious groups. Of the 35 seats, Shi’ite Arabs will control 14; Sunni Arabs 13; Sunni Kurds 5; Sunni Turkomens 2; and Christian Assyrians 1.<sup>iv</sup> A predictable Sunni concern has been that, given their minority status (roughly 15-20 percent of the Iraqi population, versus roughly 60 percent Shi’ite), a representative body such as the Council would place them at a political disadvantage and deprive them of the disproportionate power they have become accustomed to. Much thought, however, has gone into the seat allocation process in an effort to accommodate Sunni concerns, as well as those of other minority groups. In addition, it is imperative that Kurdish

demands for continued autonomous authority in the northern region (what to them should be the autonomous nation of Kurdistan) are accommodated. Otherwise, according to Crane and Terrill of the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, it is “extremely doubtful that they (Kurds) can work with Iraq’s other minorities to build a functioning government”.<sup>v</sup> Given the current unstable situation in Iraq, how (in addition to traditional force-on-force combat operations) can the operational level Coalition force commander best leverage the military instrument of power to help bring democracy to Iraq?

## ANALYSIS

Prior to discussing the results of my research and presenting several recommendations, it is appropriate to identify and briefly discuss several overarching contextual factors which are negatively impacting the current situation in Iraq. These factors include history in general and western imperialism in particular, culture, ethnicity, tribalism, religion (including the enduring negative affect of the Crusades), and pervasive anti-western (increasingly anti-U.S.) sentiment.<sup>vi</sup> Considered individually, they are problematic; however, in unison, they may prove insurmountable.

Owing much to its strategic geographic location, Iraq’s history has been fraught with hardship, fragmentation, and violent confrontation. The concept of a unified Iraq is a relatively recent--and some would say artificial--phenomenon. With the conquest of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the British cobbled together what had historically been three ethnically and religiously diverse and frequently antagonistic Muslim “vilayets,” namely, Baghdad; Basra; and Mosul.<sup>vii</sup>,<sup>viii</sup>,<sup>ix</sup> Baghdad was predominantly Sunni Arab, Basra predominantly Arab Shi’ite, and Mosul predominantly Kurdish. This expedient solution has

been referred to as an “administrative convenience”<sup>x</sup> taken without regard to Iraq’s potential viability as a single, unified nation. Not much has changed, and sharp ethnic, cultural, religious, and tribal fracture lines still exist and dominate Iraqi life. Unlike Germany and Japan, which were both “democratized” after World War II, Iraq is not ethnically homogenous and it does not possess a strong national identity, parliamentary traditions, or a sound legal foundation.<sup>xi</sup> Given its volatile demographics, more than one historian/political scientist has speculated that without Saddam Hussein’s ruthless leadership, Iraq would have fractured long ago.<sup>xii</sup> These are critically important contextual elements that must be considered when nation building--and especially when attempting to effect regime change to an alien form of government.

Based on indelible memories of the violent thousand-year-old anti-Muslim Christian Crusades and Twentieth century western European (primarily British and French) regional colonization, there is a pervasive belief within the Arab world--including Iraq--that the enduring primary interests in and motivating factors behind western actions are hegemonic imperialism and oil. Closely associated with this perception of western motivation is a pervasive anti-western (increasingly anti-U.S.) sentiment among the Iraqi people. This sentiment is aggravated by the relatively favorable relationship between the United States and Israel and perceived anti-Arab U.S. bias.

Adding to this anti-western sentiment are memories of the humiliating back-to-back decisive defeats inflicted upon Iraq by U.S.-lead coalitions in Gulf War I (1991) and Gulf War II (2003). The military outcomes of both conflicts were decisive and never in question and forced Iraqis to confront the reality that, despite being a significant regional power, Iraq was essentially impotent against the west. In addition to anti-western animosity produced by

these conflicts, hardships and deprivations endured by the Iraqi people as a result of post-Gulf War I UN sanctions have served to crystallize ill will towards the west.

Despite the year-long combined efforts of the CPA, Coalition forces, surviving Iraqi institutions, and a majority of the Iraqi people, the situation in Iraq remains unstable...and dangerous. Cleric-led anti-Coalition Shi'ite militias have joined former regime loyalists and Sunni insurgents in resisting the Coalition with coordinated savage attacks on Coalition forces and innocent Iraqi citizens. As unstable as Iraq currently is, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger recently noted that the security situation in Iraq is likely to worsen after the transfer of sovereignty--at least temporarily--as various factions threatened by democracy target the new Iraqi government.<sup>xiii</sup>

A vocal and violent minority of Iraqis, augmented by radical insurgents, is absolutely opposed to the democratization of Iraq and have repeatedly expressed their willingness to do whatever it takes to stop it. An almost infinite number of observations could be drawn from the current situation. However, since the focus of this paper is on the operational level Coalition force commander, and military courses of action (COAs) he can take to further the democratization process, the balance of the analysis focuses primarily on military options.

Despite increasingly negative American domestic sentiment concerning the situation in Iraq (influenced, no doubt, by the media's relentless graphic display of carnage) and the recently announced imminent departure of Coalition members Spain, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic, it is absolutely imperative that remaining Coalition members remain committed and in place. It is vitally important that Coalition members remain committed to Iraq's democratization and to an indefinite presence in Iraq. An exit strategy based on arbitrary events and/or dates is a recipe for failure. Future withdrawal considerations (likely

years down the road) must be based on the achievement of legitimate meaningful measures of effectiveness pertaining to the democratization process (not merely simplistic “bean counting”). Similarly, for the sake of continuity and mission effectiveness, Crane and Terrill caution that “units and their leaders can not be rotated out after short tours.” As such, the wisdom of the current 6-month rotation policy is debatable.<sup>xiv</sup>

Through their attitude, behavior and sentiment, Coalition forces continue to inadvertently offend/alienate the Iraqi people. Many, if not most Iraqis remain skeptical of long-term Coalition intentions, and the slightest rebuff, provocation, perceived inappropriate/excessive use of force, or untoward behavior or non-verbal communication can easily confirm their suspicions and serve to alienate them. Despite significant strides in pre-deployment programs to educate and sensitize inbound Coalition members to the Arab world (Islam, customs, sensitivities, courtesies, taboos, etc.), and Islam in particular, we must do better. We must not let our distaste for the recent atrocities and violent confrontations sour our perception of all Iraqis and our interactions and relationships with them.

The negative impact of these inadvertent actions pales, however, in comparison to the negative strategic fallout likely to result from the recent disclosure of the abuse, degrading mistreatment, and alleged torture of Iraqi prisoners by U. S. Army military police personnel at Iraq’s Abu Ghraib Prison. Acting quickly to limit damage and preserve its limited credibility in the Arab world, administration officials have expressed indignation and outrage at the abuse and President Bush appeared on Arab television on May 5th denouncing it in the strongest terms and condemning the behavior of those responsible. It’s hard to tell at this point what, if any, impact Bush’s words will have on the perceptions of Arabs in general-- and Iraqis in particular. According to Cordesman, the scandal has already caused

“inestimable damage to the U.S. coalition.”<sup>xv</sup> Needless to say, the timing of the disclosure of this intolerable behavior and graphic inflammatory pictures of same couldn’t have come at a more inopportune time.

Coalition members must continue to exercise caution when referring to the “de-Baathification” of Iraq.<sup>xvi</sup> Contrary to wide-spread initial Coalition belief, not everyone who was a member of the regime’s Baath Party joined of his own volition. Many, especially members of public service professions such as teachers, had to join in order to practice their vocation. As such, carte-blanche condemnation and systematic discrimination against all former Baath Party members is inappropriate and has caused a great deal of hardship for many otherwise honest hard-working model Iraqi citizens. Once again, cultural awareness and sensitivity (and Iraqi perceptions of same) are important. This glaring oversight has been recognized and is being made right on an accelerated basis.<sup>xvii</sup>

Given its overwhelming “western” flavor, and prominent U.S. role, the Coalition lacks credibility in the eyes of many Iraqis. Long-term administration efforts to broaden the Coalition have met with only moderate success--and the recent violence has certainly not proved beneficial in this regard. Including the U.S., the Coalition currently consists of 35 members and Coalition forces number approximately 363,000 (almost 200,000 Iraqi security forces; approximately 138,000 U.S. troops; and approximately 25,000 troops from the other 33 member countries).<sup>xviii</sup> The CPA’s imminent stand down and transference of sovereignty notwithstanding, the recently announced defections of Coalition members Spain, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic are ill timed and do not bode well for the Coalition. Despite this unfortunate turn of events, diplomatic efforts to broaden the Coalition by recruiting new members must continue unabated. Especially important is the recruitment and prominent

involvement of moderate Arab states. Not only will the inclusion of Arab states serve as a visible model of West-Arab cooperation, it will significantly enhance Coalition credibility. In the interest of clarification, it should be noted that, while the CPA is standing down, Coalition forces are staying put indefinitely and billions of dollars in additional direct aid and subsidies (a minimum of \$19 billion from the U.S. alone) will continue to flow into Iraq.<sup>xix</sup> Coalition forces will remain in Iraq at present strength indefinitely to train and augment Iraqi security forces and to help ensure stability and security. This is a critical point, for without at least a modicum of stability and security, the Iraqi people will not trust their government to protect and provide for them, and democracy will almost certainly fail.

While not wholly unanticipated, and certainly not out of character, the challenge to Iraqi stability and democracy currently being waged primarily at the behest of a handful of radical Islamic clerics (Sunni and Shi'ite alike) is quite troubling and problematic. Presently, the most ominous threat appears to be that posed by Sayyid Muatada al-Sadr, a relatively young (30-year old) upstart Shi'ite cleric, whose martyred father, the Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, was perceived as a threat by Hussein and purportedly arrested, tortured, and eventually killed at Hussein's behest. Al-Sadr (the son) apparently possesses significant charisma and is reportedly the personal representative of exiled Shi'ite Grand Ayatollah Kazim al Husseinini al-Haeri, who has been living in Iran for years to avoid almost certain death at the hands of Hussein.<sup>xx</sup> Al-Sadr is not the only cleric challenging Coalition authority and the legitimacy of the interim Iraqi government and advocating Islamic rule; however, he's certainly the most vociferous and violent. If stability is to be achieved, and if democracy is to have a chance, the Coalition and Iraqi security forces must find an

acceptable way to neutralize al-Sadr and others like him. “Acceptable” in this instance means something other than killing or imprisoning him--or otherwise martyring him.

Finally, but certainly not least, is the challenge posed by the continued stream of insurgents infiltrating Iraq, primarily from Syria and Iran. They are purportedly a major source of the violent attacks on Coalition forces. Action must be taken to better monitor and secure Iraq’s borders with its unsavory neighbors. Increasingly capable surveillance and tracking technology appears to hold promise and must be aggressively leveraged.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

While many of the potential solutions to the problems discussed above are more diplomatic, political, and/or economic than military in nature, and are therefore beyond the scope of this paper, there are a number of concrete military COAs that could be pursued to enhance Iraqi security and stability--critical prerequisites if democracy is to have a chance. Each is briefly discussed and possible counterarguments presented.

The first course of action that must be pursued is not new or innovative; it involves remaining resolute, staying the course. It is absolutely imperative that Coalition members remained firmly committed to the concept of bringing security and stability--and ultimately democracy--to Iraq. This commitment must be unconditional, regardless of the level of effort, possible duration, and/or human sacrifice. Given the rising death toll, and fickle domestic support, this will not be easy. However, the goals of a stable, democratic, and prosperous Iraq, and enhanced regional stability, are noble and worth the sacrifice. The difficult challenge of such long term commitment was recognized by former USCENTCOM Commander retired Marine General Anthony Zinni prior to OIF when he cautioned, “If we

think there is a fast solution to changing the governance of Iraq...then we don't understand history.”<sup>xxi</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld reaffirmed Zinni's concern when he recently stated that replacing Iraq's governing regime amounts to “a long, hard slog.”<sup>xxii</sup> Commitment and continued support will go a long way towards convincing the Iraqi people that the Coalition does, in fact, have their best interests at heart. The Iraqi people, in turn, must understand that they must actively support and participate in the Coalition and increasingly take the lead in helping to ensure their own safety and security. Giving up and walking away from the current situation would be playing directly into the hands of the anti-coalition factions and is the wrong thing to do. Future consideration of the withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq should be based solely on the achievement of objective measures of effectiveness, not on an arbitrary timeline or for short-sighted political gain.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Despite the need for commitment, it appears increasingly likely that the longer the current elevated level of violence continues unabated and the death toll continues to rise, additional Coalition members will consider leaving the Coalition. A good example is the 2,500-strong Polish contingent, up till now a bulwark member. According to various recent media reports, the Polish political leadership is coming under increasing domestic pressure to withdraw its contingent from Iraq. In assessing this negative trend one must ask what, if any, incentives are there to induce Coalition members to remain committed to the cause. Unfortunately, other than a sense of commitment and international responsibility and/or a desire to help ensure Iraq's future and enhance the prospects of regional stability, tangible incentives are limited. One of the most troublesome conundrums facing current and potential Coalition members is speculating as to how long military force will be needed to help the

fledgling Iraqi security forces provide for a secure and stable Iraq--something that continues to elude its protagonists.

In addition to ensuring current Coalition members remain firmly committed, it is imperative that the Coalition be significantly enlarged as soon as possible. Unfortunately, for many of the same reasons cited above in regards to the need for long-term commitment, attracting new members is likely to prove exceedingly difficult.

As such, and despite the wholesale withdrawal of the United Nations (UN) from Iraq last year after the tragic bombing of its compound (resulting in the death of the senior UN representative and others), the return of the UN and a large contingent of UN-sponsored troops could prove invaluable. Placing the Coalition under the auspices of the UN would automatically add significant credibility and legitimacy to Coalition forces and their mission. Despite the inevitability of the return of the UN to Iraq, there are no currently no plans for the large-scale deployment of UN-sponsored troops to Iraq or for UN management of the Iraqi stabilization process. There has also been limited speculation that, in an expansion (i.e. liberal interpretation) of its charter, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) might consider augmenting Coalition forces with a contingent of NATO troops. As of yet, however, the NATO leadership has not seriously entertained this eventuality. This is unfortunate, as a number of nations who might otherwise be willing to join the Coalition, will not consider doing so unless under the auspices of a permanent multi-nation alliance such as the UN or NATO. Among the more frequent reasons cited for this reluctance is an aversion to participating in or being associated with what is rightfully perceived to as an essentially unilateral U.S. action. One also can't help speculating that a few countries (i.e. those that

vehemently opposed OIF--especially its semi-unilateral nature) are actually deriving a degree of enjoyment from the Iraqi quagmire in which the U.S. currently finds itself mired.

Regardless of whether the UN and/or NATO deploys troops to Iraq, the broader and less “western” the Coalition, the better. A concerted and persistent effort must be made to convince moderate Arab states to join the effort.<sup>xxiv</sup> As difficult as this may prove, Arab participation could be decisive. Whatever the composition of the Coalition, every effort should be made to limit the U.S. footprint to whatever degree security considerations will permit.<sup>xxv</sup> The less visible the U.S. military is, the less likely it will continue to be perceived as an imperialistic occupying force, and the less likely Americans--service members and civilians alike--will be targeted.

Given the prevailing anti-west/U.S. bias in the region, it’s hard to imagine many, if any, Arab nations being willing to join the Coalition--especially under the auspices of U.S. leadership. Placing Muslim forces under the command of non-Muslim leadership would violate one of the key tenants of Islamic law which prohibits Muslims from submitting to the authority of non-Muslim rulers.<sup>xxvi</sup> Even if an acceptable command and control arrangement could be worked out, it would still potentially pit one Arab against another--problematic, but not unprecedented (e.g. Gulf War I). Another disincentive arguing against the likelihood of Arab participation in the Coalition is the possibility of punitive retaliation by one or more of the more radical Arab factions for collaborating with what is widely perceived to be an imperialistic western occupying (vice liberating) “crusader” force. Finally, some Arab nations, fearful of the prospect of a prosperous unified potentially hegemonic Iraq, would prefer to stay out of the fray in the hope that Iraq would eventually implode/explode along

the previously described factional lines--leading to the establishment of several less capable sovereigns.

As noted above, the openly hostile behavior and call to arms of a relatively limited number of radical Islamic clerics (most notably al-Sadr) continues to pose a seemingly insurmountable threat to security and stability. Short of a diplomatic solution which, given history and the clerics' hard-line positions, does not appear likely, Coalition forces must find a way to effectively neutralize them. Despite Iraq's status as one of the more secular Arab states--especially under Hussein's rule, Islam continues to play a dominant and influential role in Iraqi life. In turn, clerics--especially senior Sunni clerics such as "relative moderate" Ali-Sistani--are revered and wield significant influence. In this regard, Crane and Terrill recommend that the Coalition emphasize areas of agreement with non-extremist clerics and avoid actions that could force the Iraqi people and the more moderate clerics to support Iraq's extremist clerics.<sup>xxvii</sup>,<sup>xxviii</sup> As this paper is being written (late April/early May 2004), Coalition forces continue their siege of Najaf where al-Sadr and his militia are held up. Their task is made more difficult by the need to avoid inadvertently killing al-Sadr, effectively martyring him. As such, great sensitivity and innovation will be required if the more troublesome clerics are to be neutralized. Arresting or killing them is likely out of the question due to the martyrdom issue. Possibilities include restricting their movement; finding ways to discredit them (politically risky if the plan is compromised); and/or "muzzling" them (restricting their ability to meet/communicate with their followers).

Identifying an effective and acceptable way to deal with the radical Islamic clerics is one of the most vexing problems facing the Coalition. Unless and until a way can be found to negate the clerics' ability to portray the resistance against the Coalition and the

democratization of Iraq in religious terms (i.e. a jihad), resolving confrontation will prove exceedingly difficult. One would hope that logic would eventually prevail; however, where religion is concerned, emotion often prevails and logic often takes a back seat.

Finally, the Coalition force commander must find a way(s) to stop the flood of hostile insurgents continuing to penetrate Iraq's porous borders--primarily over land from Syria and Iran. The most viable solution is probably a synergistic combination of enhanced physical barriers; less border crossings (currently 20) and better trained and equipped Iraqi security forces; more proactive and effective human intelligence (HUMINT) to identify and monitor potential insurgents; and increased leveraging of technology (e.g. automated "watch lists" of known and/or suspected terrorists/insurgents, 24/7 aerial surveillance--increasingly feasible through the employment of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs))--and tracking tools.<sup>xxix</sup>

Despite the potential promise these initiatives hold for helping to resolve the insurgent problem, several concerns warrant mention. First, Iraq's borders with its unsavory neighbors Iran and Syria are quite long (906 miles and 376 miles respectively),<sup>xxx</sup> and much of the contiguous geography is extremely remote, uninhabited, and relatively inaccessible. The length of its borders, combined with limited security forces/border guards, makes effectively patrolling Iraq's borders extremely difficult, if not impossible. Despite ongoing CPA efforts to recruit, screen, and train additional Iraqi security forces and border guards, it is a slow process and the force is still far from sufficient. Recruit quality and loyalty are a continuing concern and must constantly be monitored. A final consideration is the difficulty of establishing, virtually from scratch, an effective HUMINT operation. In addition to recruiting and training trusted linguists, indigenous covert sources with appropriate access

must be identified, vetted and recruited. All this takes time--something that, given the urgency of the problem, is in short supply.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research conducted in support of this paper unequivocally supports the paper's thesis: "Given the ongoing insurgency, and seemingly insurmountable historic, cultural, demographic, and religious challenges, bringing lasting democracy (i.e. representative government) to Iraq will prove exceedingly difficult."

After briefly reviewing the provocations and noncompliance that led to OIF, and defining democracy, several overarching contextual factors were discussed. These included Iraq's unique history, culture, ethnicity, tribalism and religion, and the vehement anti-western (increasingly anti-U.S.) sentiment prevalent throughout much of the region.

The almost certain positive impact a secure, stable and prosperous democratic Iraq would have on the region was sharply contrasted with the destabilizing impact of an Islamic-based theocratic Iraq. It was noted that, unless the Coalition is successful in helping to bring democracy to Iraq, the likelihood of the later scenario is a distinct--and chilling--possibility.

Analysis disclosed a number of factors which, unfortunately, argue against the likelihood of Iraq successfully adopting and implementing a democratic/representative form of government. These factors include Iraq's long history of violence and ethnic, religious and tribal factionalism; a transcendent perception among Arabs--including many Iraqis--that the primary motive behind western interest in the region is hegemonic imperialism; widespread Iraqi indignation stemming from consecutive humiliating Iraqi military defeats at

the hands of U.S.-led coalitions; the persistent lack of security and palpable instability which the Coalition has not been able to ameliorate; the powerful anti-Coalition/anti-democracy influence exercised over the Iraqi people by extremist Islamic clerics (most notably al-Sadr); the imminent departure of several coalition members (Spain, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic), the possible future loss of Poland, and the difficulty of recruiting new Coalition members; the negative impact on Coalition credibility of both unintended (innocent, but none-the-less offensive) behavior and intentional inappropriate behavior by a minority of Coalition forces--most notably the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib Prison; the Coalition's misinformed "carte-blanche" debaathification campaign; the overwhelming western (non-Arab) flavor of the Coalition and related recruiting challenges; and finally, the enduring threat posed by the flow of insurgents into Iraq from Iran and Syria.

Despite these challenges, and this paper's rather pessimistic thesis, there are a number of substantive actions, many of which can be taken in conjunction with the Iraqi leadership, which Coalition forces can take to help bring lasting democracy to Iraq. These actions include remaining steadfastly committed to the Coalition; broadening the Coalition; encouraging the return of the UN to Iraq and, ideally, the deployment of UN-sponsored peacemaking forces; encouraging NATO involvement; neutralizing and/or isolating (without martyring) extremist Islamic clerics; and finally, stemming the flow of insurgents into Iraq.

While these actions certainly can not guarantee success, they are definitely steps in the right direction. We simply can not afford to inefficiently and ineffectively misapply finite Coalition forces and squander limited Coalition credibility. They must be intelligently leveraged to help ensure a secure and stable Iraq. Such actions are absolute prerequisites if democracy is to have a chance.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> W. Andrew Terrill, *Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of the U.S. Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), U.S. Army War College, July 2003, 9.

<sup>ii</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, “The War after the War in Iraq,” *Reserve Officers Association (ROA) National Security Report* (October 2003): 29.

<sup>iii</sup> Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Democracy in Iraq?” *The Washington Quarterly*, 26:3, (Summer 2003): 128.

<sup>iv</sup> Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: SSI, U. S. Army War College (February 2003), 29.

<sup>v</sup> Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: SSI, U. S. Army War College (February 2003), 29.

<sup>vi</sup> Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, W. Andrew, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U. S. Army War College (February 2003), 1.

<sup>vii</sup> W. Andrew Terrill, *Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of the U.S. Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq*, V & 1.

<sup>viii</sup> Julie Kosterlitz, “Occupational Hazards,” *National Journal*, 35, no. 12 (22 March 2003): 911.

<sup>ix</sup> Stanley Reed, “Forging One Nation from Three Agendas: What’s the Best Way to Bring Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds Together Under a Cohesive Democracy?” *Business Week*, (29 December 2003): 41.

<sup>x</sup> W. Andrew Terrill, *Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of the U.S. Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq*, 2.

<sup>xi</sup> Alan Sorenson, “The Reluctant Nation Builders” *Current History*, 102, no. 668 (December 2003): 409.

<sup>xii</sup> Reed, 41.

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<sup>xiii</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, “Reflections on a Sovereign Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 8 February 2004, as accessed via the *Kurdistan Observer* on the Internet on 13 May 2004 at <http://homecogeco.ca/~kurdistan1/10-2-4-opinion-kissinger-divide-irq.html>.

<sup>xiv</sup> Crane and Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*, 18.

<sup>xv</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, ABC News Interview aired @0630 on WPRO 630AM, Providence RI, 4 May 2004.

<sup>xvi</sup> Terrill, July 2003, 36.

<sup>xvii</sup> L. Paul Bremer, III (Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Administrator), Speech to the Iraqi People, 23 April 2004.

<sup>xviii</sup> CPA Administrator’s Weekly Report, 24-30 Apr 2004.

<sup>xix</sup> Bremer, 23 April 2004.

<sup>xx</sup> Terrill, July 2003, 22.

<sup>xxi</sup> Dodge, Toby, review of “Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied,” by Fred Rhodes, *Middle East*, 342 (February 2004): 64.

<sup>xxii</sup> Alan Sorensen, 407.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Crane and Terrill, February 2003, 8.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Terrill, July 2003, 36 & 36.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ibid, 13, 14 & 31.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Crane and Terrill, February 2003, 19.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Terrill, July 2003, 34.

<sup>xxviii</sup> W. Andrew Terrill, *The United States and Iraq’s Shi’ite Clergy: Partners or Adversaries?*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: SSI, U. S. Army War College, February 2004, 34 & 35.

<sup>xxix</sup> Bremer, 23 April 2004.

<sup>xxx</sup> CIA World Fact Book, December 2003; as accessed on 11 May 2004 via the Internet at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html#Geo>.

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